

The Benefits of Apple Cider Vinegar to Dogs

Pet Uses

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Vinegar has long been used as a first-aid treatment. Many natural health experts prefer raw organic apple cider vinegar for topical applications, including muscle aches and bruises; sunburn, windburn, abrasions, insect bites, and stings; and hair care (controlling dandruff and improving condition and static control).

Nearly all of vinegar's human uses can be applied to pets. Because puppies and some dogs have sensitive skin, test a small area by applying vinegar or a vinegar-based herbal tincture (liquid concentrate) recommended for topical use. Check the area every few hours for up to 24 hours. If redness or irritation develops, dilute the vinegar and try again or discontinue use. This type of patch test is not necessary when applying vinegar that will be washed or rinsed off within a few minutes.

Insect Repellent

-Plain vinegar and herbal tinctures containing cider vinegar repel insects, including fleas and mosquitoes. Spray the neck, torso, tail, underbelly, and overall coat (avoid the eyes, nose, and mouth) and let dry.

-For a nontoxic flea dip, cover your dog or puppy with ACV (spray, sponge, or simply pour it on), working it into the skin and coat. Avoid the eyes, nose, and mouth. Let stand for several minutes before washing with gentle shampoo.

-Dab full-strength cider vinegar or a cider vinegar herbal tincture behind the ears, near the tail, and on the dog's coat. Because herbal tinctures and cider vinegar can stain light or white coats, substitute distilled white vinegar for light-coated dogs.

Pet stains and odors

-Mix 1 part distilled white vinegar with 3 parts water. Pour onto carpet or other stained areas and blot with fabric or paper towels. Do not rub.

-Refresh and deodorize pet bedding by spraying it with vinegar or by adding vinegar to laundry when washing bedding.

-Clean and disinfect pet toys by spraying lightly, then brushing or wiping clean.

-Vinegar is often recommended as a pet deodorizer. Apply diluted or full-strength vinegar to any stinky coat and let the dog air-dry.

If your dog rolled on well-rotted mammal parts or got sprayed by a skunk, mix 1 freshly opened quart of 3-percent hydrogen peroxide in a plastic container with 1/4 cup baking soda and 1 teaspoon liquid soap. Wearing protective gloves, cover the dog while avoiding the nose, eyes, and mouth, then rinse with plain water. If any fragrance lingers (as it did when my Labrador recently rolled on a decomposing carp), apply vinegar to complete the process.